

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

July 16, 2014

Oakland County Substance Abuse Advisory Council

Representative Haveman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shelley Taub, and I am an Oakland County Commissioner and member of the Oakland County Substance Abuse Advisory Council which will become the Substance Abuse Policy Oversight Board as of October 1, 2014. This board will oversee the local funding for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) prevention and treatment services passed through the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on HB 4891 and the positive impact the passage of this bill would have on individuals who receive SUD services in Oakland County and across Michigan.

There are an increasing number of individuals needing recovery supports, treatment services and prevention programs to address substance use disorders. In Oakland County, the highest level of admissions for publicly funded treatment services is for individuals with alcohol dependence. The second highest admission rates are for prescription drugs and heroin. Both substance use disorders require specialty services such as sub-acute detoxification, medication assisted treatment, overdose prevention initiatives (e.g. Narcan) for first responders, recovery supports to assist individuals in their journey towards sustained recovery and evidenced based prevention programs targeted towards youth.

A dedicated funding stream allows for not only the expansion of services, but innovative approaches to be utilized that aren't affordable under current funding mechanisms. It is reported that less than 10% of the people needing treatment actually receive it. For example, persons needing residential treatment, especially for adolescents, are finding it less available and for shorter lengths of stay than may be needed. Parents of children needing help for alcohol or drug problems are especially finding it difficult to get the help they seek.

In addition, a dedicated funding stream ensures that adequate services will be available to the increased numbers of people who will be directed to treatment from the growing diversion programs initiated by the legislature (e.g. sobriety courts, mental health courts) to reduce corrections costs by placing persons in more appropriate services. The numerous diversion programs being developed will draw increasing numbers of the untreated into treatment, with the ensuing benefits to the individuals, their families and their communities. This funding means the needed services will actually be available. Without it, the promise of diversion efforts for improved health and safety in our communities will not be fulfilled.

Michigan's support for substance use disorder services has been reduced by nearly 50% since 1995; one of the lowest levels in the country. HB 4891 will restore most of the funding level of nearly 20 years ago. I urge you to pass HB 4891 so we can have a dedicated funding stream to address this serious public health issue and create a funding level more consistent with the growing treatment needs in the community.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I will be happy to answer any questions